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## *Gun-shooting vandals cause power outage*

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### **Bonneville Power Administration**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: FRIDAY, Nov. 23, 2001**

PR 84 01

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**FORT ROCK, Ore.** — The Bonneville Power Administration is offering a reward of up to \$1,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of gun-wielding vandals who shot at a transmission line and left Fort Rock and Christmas Valley without power for about three hours on Nov. 19.

The shooting damaged insulators on the BPA transmission line and caused a power outage in the two communities Monday evening, Nov. 19. Customers in both communities were without power between 7:41 p.m. and 11:04 p.m. while maintenance crews repaired the line.

Informants can call toll free at (800) 437-2744. The identity of informants is kept strictly confidential.

“This was a particularly serious incident,” said BPA Security Specialist Mike Berg. “People in these rural communities rely on electricity for their basic services — heat, water and lights. No one in these remote areas wants to be without power in the winter.”

Damage to the insulators on BPA’s 115-kilovolt transmission line from La Pine to Christmas Valley in south-central Oregon interrupted service to two substations owned by Midstate Electric Cooperative. BPA crews repaired the damage as quickly as possible.

Vandalism accounts for millions of dollars in damage to the Northwest power system each year. The direct cost to BPA of this incident was about \$3,000. These costs get passed on to ratepayers.

Beyond the monetary costs and inconveniences is the possible disruption of essential services – fire, police and medical – that depend on reliable electric service. Shooting at high-voltage transmission lines also is a potential threat to those doing the shooting. Downed power lines can cause ground voltages that can kill or injure anyone near the line as well start fires.

Since 1994, BPA's Crime Witness program has generated hundreds of tips resulting in dozens of arrests, thousands of dollars of recovered property and, most important, deterrence of future crime. Cumulative savings since the program began total more than \$3,900,000.

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